

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00

L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 ITC-01 SP-02 USIA-06 AGRE-00

AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07 IO-13 LAB-04

NSAE-00 OIC-02 EPG-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00

CEA-01 OES-07 /115 W

-----280806Z 082090 /21

R 271142Z MAY 77

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3912

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE EC BRUSSELS 5412

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, UNCTAD

SUBJECT: EC COMMISSION VIEWS ON COMMODITY DISCUSSION CONCERNING
JUTE AND HARD FIBERS

REF: (A) BONN 8159, (B) STATE 100145, (C) EC BRUSSELS 4614

1. SUMMARY: EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS INFORM US THAT THE EC COUNCIL RAW MATERIALS GROUP REACHED NO DECISION ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE UNCTAD QUESTIONNAIRE ON JUTE. REGARDING HARD FIBER DISCUSSIONS, THESE OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT EC IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE INDIAN PROPOSAL OF A "COIR INTERNATIONAL". THEY DO NOT FAVOR AN INTERNATIONAL HARD FIBERS AGREEMENT.
END SUMMARY.

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2. EC COMMISSION STAFF OFFICIALS WHO ARE HANDLING COMMISSION FIBER ACTIVITIES TELL US THAT THE EC COUNCIL RAW MATERIALS WORKING GROUP MET IN BRUSSELS ON MAY 24 TO CONSIDER A JOINT RESPONSE TO UNCTAD QUESTIONNAIRE ON JUTE AND JUTE PRODUCTS. AS ANTICIPATED IN REF. A, FRG REPRESENTATIVES HAD RESERVATIONS REGARDING EC PARTICIPATION IN AN UNCTAD STUDY OF HARMONIZATION OF SYNTHETIC SUBSTITUTES

AND JUTE PRODUCTION. THE GROUP CONSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO DEFER A DECISION ON WHETHER THE EC SHOULD RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE. INSTEAD, THE GROUP WILL AWAIT THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT'S REPLY TO A COMMISSION LETTER OF MAY 13 SUGGESTING THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD BE SENT TO ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNCTAD JUTE DISCUSSIONS, AND NOT JUST TO INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY PARTICIPANTS. EC PERMDEL OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT OTHER MEMBER STATES ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO THE UNCTAD QUESTIONNAIRE, IF UNCTAD SENDS IT TO ALL PARTICIPANTS. THEY BELIEVE THE FRG WILL LIKELY LIFT ITS CURRENT RESERVATION AT THE GROUP'S NEXT MEETING IN EARLY JUNE AS LONG AS THE EC MAKES IT CLEAR THAT ITS RESPONSE DOES NOT PREJUDICE THE EC POSITION REGARDING HARMONIZATION AND AS LONG AS THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS SENT TO ALL PARTICIPANTS. (FRG PERMDEL OFFICIALS HERE WERE NOT INFORMED ON THIS MATTER.)

3. COMMISSION STAFF OFFICIALS SAY THE EC GENERALLY DOES NOT FAVOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL JUTE AGREEMENT, BECAUSE SUCH AN AGREEMENT IS NOT ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE. INSTEAD, THE EC IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSIST BANGLADESH IN FINANCING A NATIONAL JUTE BUFFER STOCK AND TO DIVERSIFY AND IMPROVE BANGLADESH PRODUCTION AND MARKETING TECHNIQUES.

4. IN THIS REGARD, AS INDICATED IN EC BRUSSELS 4551, THE EC IS PLANNING TO HOLD IN EARLY JULY A ROUND-TABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISCUSSION IN BRUSSELS WITH INDIAN AND BANGLADESH OFFICIALS AND JUTE PRODUCERS. THIS DISCUSSION WILL EXCHANGE VIEWS ON WAYS TO IMPROVE THE MARKETING AND USE OF JUTE PRODUCTS IN THE EC. EUROPEAN JUTE TRADERS WILL PARTICIPATE. EC OFFICIALS ADD THAT THE FAO AND UNCTAD DISCUSSIONS WILL NOT BE BROUGHT UP IN THE ROUND-TABLE. AT THIS TIME, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER BANGLADESH WILL PARTICIPATE WITH INDIAN OFFICIALS. INSTEAD, THEY MAY HOLD A SEPARATE ROUND-TABLE.

5. REGARDING THE INDIAN PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A COIR INTERNATIONAL (SEE ROME A-106), COMMISSION OFFICIALS SAY THAT THE EC WILL LIKELY SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL. THE EC ALREADY HAS A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN COIR PRODUCTS WITH INDIA. IT CONSEQUENTLY IS COMMITTED TO DISCUSS COIR MARKETING PROBLEMS BILATERALLY WITH THE INDIANS AND WOULD HAVE NO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS ON AN INTERNATIONAL BASIS.

6. REGARDING A POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON
HARD FIBERS, COMMISSION OFFICIALS SAY THAT WOULD,
HOWEVER, LIKE TO REINFORCE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS TO
MAINTAIN THE PRICE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN SISAL FIBER
AND TWINE.HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, COMMODITIES, JUTE, NEGOTIATIONS, FIBERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ECBRU05412
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770191-0570
Format: TEL
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770511/aaaaaixh.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b59c6088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 8159, 77 STATE 100145, 77 EC BRUSSELS 4614
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2342218
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC COMMISSION VIEWS ON COMMODITY DISCUSSION CONCERNING JUTE AND HARD FIBERS
TAGS: ETRD, UNCTAD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b59c6088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009